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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Original) A method of providing direct access to a voice mail system (VMS) hosting a voice mail box associated with a service subscriber, the method comprising steps of:
formulating a call set-up message for initiating the establishment of a call connection to the VMS, the call set-up message having a format reserved for a redirected call set-up message issued by a service switching point (SSP) in response to an uncompleted call to the service subscriber; and
issuing the call setup message into a common channel signaling (CCS) network to initiate the establishment of the call connection directly to the voice mail box of the service subscriber.
2. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the CCS network uses signaling system 7 (SS7) protocol, and the step of formulating a call set-up message further comprises steps of:
instantiating an integrated-users-digital-network-user-part (ISUP) initial address message (IAM);
~~inserting a directory number (DN) of the VMS into a called party number parameter in the IAM;~~ and

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inserting a redirecting number parameter, an original called number parameter, and a redirection information parameter into the IAM, in conformance with a SS7 standard.

3. / (Original) A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the step of inserting comprises a step of inserting the service subscriber's DN into the original called number and the redirecting number parameters, in conformance with the SS7 standard.

4. / (Original) A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the step of inserting further comprises a step of inserting a redirecting reason code into a redirection information parameter, the reason code being used by the VMS to select a voice mail prompt to play to the calling party.

5. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the step of inserting further comprises a step of inserting a redirecting reason code into the redirection information parameter, the reason code being a default value indicating that the reason for redirection is unknown or not available.

6. (Original) A method of providing direct access to a voice mail box of a service subscriber to a voice mail system (VMS), the method comprising steps of:

receiving at a call control application, a message sent in response to a request for direct access to the voice mail box by a requesting party;
formulating a call setup message for initiating establishment of a call connection between the requesting party and the VMS, the call setup message having a format reserved for a redirected call setup message

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issued by a service switching point (SSP) in response to an uncompleted call to the service subscriber; and

sending the call set-up message into the CCS network to initiate the establishment of the call connection.

7. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 6 wherein the CCS network uses signaling system 7 (SS7) protocols, and the step of formulating a call setup message further comprises steps of:
- instantiating a default integrated user digital network-user part (ISUP) initial address message (IAM);
- inserting a directory number (DN) of the VMS's into a called party number parameter of the IAM; and
- inserting a redirecting number parameter and an original called number parameter in the IAM, in conformance with a SS7 standard.
8. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 7 wherein the step of inserting comprises a step of inserting a DN of the service subscriber into the original called number and redirecting number parameters, in conformance with the SS7 standard.
9. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 8 further comprising a step of inserting a redirecting reason code into a redirection information parameter, the redirecting reason code identifying the IAM as a request to leave a voice message with a direct to voice mail call.

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10. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 8 further comprising a step of inserting a default value redirecting reason code into the redirection information parameter.
11. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 8 wherein the step of receiving the message comprises steps of:
receiving a connection request message; and
inspecting the connection request message to remove three identifiers; a requesting party identifier, a service subscriber identifier, and a VMS identifier. ✓
12. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 11 wherein the step of receiving a connection request message comprises a step of receiving over an Internet protocol (IP) connection, from a server on the Internet adapted to receive click-to-voice mail notifications from at least one worldwide web page, a connection request message that conforms to a predefined format and includes directory numbers for the requesting party, service subscriber and VMS.
13. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 12 further comprising steps of:
initiating an establishment of a call connection between the requesting party's DN and a virtual instance of a call control node (CCN) prior to the step of sending; and
effecting an extension of the call connection from the virtual instance of the CCN to the VMS with the step of sending.

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14. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 11 wherein the step of receiving comprises a step receiving a reconnect request message from call termination equipment, the reconnect connect message including a DN of the call termination equipment, a DN of the requesting party, a DN of the service subscriber and a DN of the VMS.

15. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 14 further comprising steps of:

effecting a forward release of a part of the established call connection between a virtual instance of the CCN and the call termination equipment; and

initiating an establishment of an extension of the established call connection from the virtual instance of the CCN to the VMS with the step of sending.

16. 40. (Cancelled)